

western union

Telex
western union

Telex
western union

lex

NYT20
KAPLAN (SUB DATELINE)

BY ANTHONY RIPLEY

(C) 1971 NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

DENVER, SEPT. 5--THERE IS A WORLD OF INTERNATIONAL ADVENTURERS, OF WOULD-BE SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE WHO, FOR A PRICE, CAN BE HIRED TO TAKE ON THE MOST OUTLANDISH SCHEMES FROM AERIAL BOMBING OF A LATIN-AMERICAN CAPITAL TO TRAINING AND EQUIPPING A MERCENARY ARMY.

IT IS A WORLD POPULATED BY PART-TIME PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS, RESTLESS EX-MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY SPECIAL FORCES, EX-CONVICTS AND ORDINARY CITIZENS WHO HOLD RESPECTABLE JOBS AND OCCASIONALLY DISAPPEAR FOR A FEW WEEKS, ONLY TO RETURN WITH HARROWING TALES OF ADVENTURE.

IT WAS A MAN KNOWN AMONG THESE RANKS, VICTOR E. STADTER, 50 YEARS OLD, OF GLENDORA, CALIF., WHO WAS AT THE CONTROLS OF A SMALL RENTED AIRPLANE THAT LANDED AT BROWNSVILLE, TEX., SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON AUG. 18 TO ADD THE LAST TOUCH TO AN EXTRAORDINARY RESCUE.

WITH STADTER IN THE AIRPLANE WAS JOEL DAVID KAPLAN, 44, A WEALTHY MAN GIVEN TO INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE WHO, RELATIVES FEARED, MIGHT BE FORCED TO FINISH HIS 28-YEAR MURDER SENTENCE OR DIE IN A MEXICAN PRISON. KAPLAN MAINTAINS THE MURDER CHARGE IS FALSE.

EARLIER THAT NIGHT WHILE PRISON GUARDS WERE PREOCCUPIED WATCHING A MOVIE IN THE SANTA MARIA ACATITLA PENITENTIARY NEAR MEXICO CITY, A HELICOPTER DROPPED INSIDE THE WALLS, PICKED UP KAPLAN AND ANOTHER PRISONER AND DISAPPEARED.

KAPLAN HAD BEEN IN PRISON NINE YEARS AND IT WAS NECESSARY TO BRING HIM INTO THE UNITED STATES LEGALLY, ACCORDING TO RELATIVES, SO THAT HE COULD CLAIM AN INHERITANCE HELD IN A TRUST FUND IN NEW YORK CITY.

SO STADTER AND KAPLAN NOTIFIED THE UNITED STATES CUSTOMS AT BROWNSVILLE THAT THEY WERE ARRIVING AND WERE MET, SEARCHED AND THEN CLEARED. KAPLAN IS NOW IN THE UNITED STATES AND IN HIDING.

STADTER, WHO APPARENTLY MASTERMINDED THE ENTIRE ESCAPE, WAS CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE AT HIS HOME IN GLENDORA.

"NOT ANOTHER PERSON ALIVE KNOWS THIS STORY BUT ME," HE SAID. "WE WERE VERY CAREFUL SO THAT NO ONE PERSON WOULD KNOW EVERYTHING."

HE ADDED WITH A DASH OF COCKINESS THAT THE RESCUE WAS "JUST A DAY'S WORK. I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR 20 YEARS."

HE SAID "JOEL NEEDS HELP" AND THAT HE WOULD BE KEPT IN HIDING UNTIL THINGS QUIET DOWN.

IN SAUSALITO, CALIF., WHERE THE RESCUED MAN'S SISTER, MRS. JUDITH DOWIS LIVES IN A BIG SPANISH MISSION-STYLE HOUSE ACROSS THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE FROM SAN FRANCISCO, THERE WAS AN AIR OF RELIEF LAST WEEK.

"I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER," SAID MRS. DOWIS, 40, A DIVORCEE. SHE SAID HER UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT HER BROTHER COULD NOT CLAIM HIS INHERITANCE HELD AT THE UNITED STATES TRUST

western union
Telex

western union
Telex

western union
Telex

COMPANY IN NEW YORK CITY UNLESS HE WAS LEGALLY IN THE NATION. THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TRUST, BARRY WALDORF, CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE IN NEW YORK CITY, SAID ONLY: "I AM NOT FREE TO GIVE YOU ANY KIND OF A COMMENT ON ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS AFFAIRS."

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE SAID KAPLAN IS NOT SOUGHT BY THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

AND IN MEXICO CITY, HIS ATTORNEY, VICTOR VELAZQUEZ, 74, SAID HE HAD BROKEN NO LAW THERE. HE EXPLAINED THAT THERE IS A GAP IN MEXICAN LAW REGARDING PRISON BREAKS. IT IS ONLY A CRIME TO BREAK OUT OF PRISON IF VIOLENCE IS USED.

"NO VIOLENCE WAS USED," STADTER SAID. "THERE WAS NOTHING EXTRA LEGAL."

VELAZQUEZ SAID HE WAS VERY HAPPY KAPLAN HAD ESCAPED BECAUSE HE WAS CONVINCED THE MAN WAS INNOCENT.

THOSE WHO KNEW KAPLAN BEFORE HIS CONVICTION SAID HE WAS INTRIGUED BY WHAT ONE MAN CALLED "THE SWAMP OF CARIBBEAN POLITICS," WHEN HE BEGAN WORKING IN HIS LATE FATHER'S SUGAR AND MOLASSES BUSINESS AFTER SERVING IN THE NAVY IN WORLD WAR II. KAPLAN GREW UP IN RIDGEFIELD, CONN., AND ATTENDED NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE.

"HIS ONLY INTEREST WAS POLITICS," SAID ONE SOURCE WHO HAS KNOWN HIM MANY YEARS.

THE SAME SOURCE SAID HE WAS FOND OF INTRIGUE AND DISGUISES AND THAT IS WHY HE USED FALSE GLASSES AND A BRITISH SEAMAN'S IDENTITY WHEN HE ENTERED MEXICO IN 1961. HE WAS WITH THREE OTHER MEN, ONE OF THEM A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE, LUIS M. VIDAL JR., WHO VELAZQUEZ DESCRIBED AS A GUN-RUNNER.

KAPLAN AT THE TIME WAS PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN SUCROSE COMPANY AND VIDAL WAS COMPANY TREASURER.

IT WAS ONE OF SEVERAL CURIOUS BUSINESS CONNECTIONS KAPLAN HAD, INCLUDING AFRATRONICS INC., WHICH WAS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE ELECTRONIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEWLY-FORMED AFRICAN NATIONS. AFRATRONICS HAD NO ASSETS OR PHYSICAL FACILITIES, JUST A NEW YORK MAILING ADDRESS AND IT LISTED FOUR AMERICAN LEADERS AS "MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS."

MORE L/FR345P

NYT21
H O L D

EDITORS:

PLEASE H O L D WASHINGTON FREEZE.

WE WILL ADVISE YOU LATER ON RELEASE.

N. Y. TIMES NEWS SERVICE

H/FR345P